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ABSTRACT

This study compares the effectiveness of two approaches to teaching advanced English writing: the productive writing approach, in which comprehension before production is emphasized, and the traditional grammar-based syllabus method. Five classes of English as a second language in a U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) language training program at the American University in Cairo participated. The students, assigned to treatment group by class, were evaluated for improvement in English usage and listening comprehension. The results show both approaches to be effective in terms of mean achievement gains. However, the range of scores became narrower in the productive writing groups, and the percentage of those students meeting the minimum achievement level set by USAID was noticeably higher, supporting the use of the productive writing approach. (MSE)

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# THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PRODUCTIVE WRITING AS SUBJECT MATTER IN TEACHING ADVANCED LEVEL ENGLISH

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO

THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE INSTITUTE

OF THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY IN CAIRO

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT

OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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EDITH d'OLIVE DIMOND

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## DEDICATION

To Sister Mary Lawlor, my teacher,
for the model she provides:
She demands much of her students
but not more than they can do;
She has faith in their ability
and they justify that faith.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many people have contributed to this project, directly and indirectly. It is an awesome task to attempt to express my deep appreciation to them all.

In terms of teaching writing, the theme of this study, several people played important roles. Dr. Kyle Perkins introduced me to the notion of teaching writing and sparked the idea for the design of this syllabus. Dr. Rik Whitaker has my special thanks for his course on magazine article and feature story writing, which generated the writing assignments used here. Also, his faith and moral support were greatly appreciated.

In the application of this syllabus, very special gratitude is felt for the support, encouragement, and (most importantly) the opportunity given to me by my friend and supervisor in the Division of Commercial and Industrial Training, Dr. Michael Liggett. My thanks, too, to Mr. John Hafenrichter of USAID for his interest in my project.

To my colleagues in the CIT -- Nabila, Paula, Gamila, Susan, Marvin, Shannon, Franca, Inas, Sawsan -- go my thanks for their commiseration and empathy. One very special colleague helped above and beyond the call of colleague: thank you, "Barbara Bless-her-heart", known to others as Barbara Kelberer McDonald.

And to my constant companion and sounding board, William Lucas, thank you for your boundless faith.

I cannot thank anyone for fine typing or ability to read my dreadful handwriting, but heartfelt thanks go to Hala Hussein for making her typewriter available so cheerfully and often.

Very special feelings of appreciation go to Dr. Salah El-Araby for his belief in the subject of this study. My deep gratitude goes to Dr. Norman Gary for his unfailing patience and good humor in reading and rereading and advising throughout. His willingness to share his knowledge is appreciated not only by me but also by all those in the TEFL program. I also want to thank Dr. Paul Stevens for his advice and worthy comments. Although he was not on my thesis committee, my thanks go to Dr. Andreas Papapavlou for the many contributions he made to my progress as a TEFL fellow.

Finally, a very special thank you to my students in this study and those before them for their dedication, hard work, and inspiration.

## ABSTRACT

This study discusses the effectiveness of productive writing as subject matter in teaching advanced level English and attempts to demonstrate that this provides a viable alternative approach. The syllabus designed by the researcher is based upon comprehension before production, thus reflecting current comprehension-based methodologies. Further it takes into consideration the acquisition-learning distinction as it applies to the population served by this study. The major emphasis is upon meaning with large amounts of input aimed at acquisition. Form is also stressed but from a writing standpoint.

The curriculum was applied in the Division of Commercial and Industrial Training at the American University in Cairo within the framework of the overall contract the University has with the U. S. Agency for International Development to provide English language training. In all, five advanced level classes participated in this study. Two were taught with the productive writing syllabus; the other three were taught with a grammar-based syllabus and served as comparison groups. The students in all classes were evaluated for improvement in usage, listening comprehension, and a global score based on the average of the usage and listening scores.

The instrument employed for evaluation was the ALIGU test applied on a pretest-posttest basis. This is the instrument and

procedure used worldwide by USAID for its selection, placement, and evaluation of candidates for further training in the United States. Since the students were selected and assigned to classes by USAID, the study used a quasi-experimental nonequivalent control group design.

In the evaluation, three types of data are examined: the mean gains, the standard deviations for indications of ranges of scores within the groups, and the percentage of students who achieved the minimum scores determined by USAID to be necessary before such students are sent to the United States for training purposes. The results show that both approaches appear to be effective in terms of mean gains. The range of scores as indicated by the standard deviations tended to become narrower with the productive writing groups. The percentage of students in the productive writing groups who met the minimum set by USAID was noticeably higher than in the comparison group.

Using productive writing, or factual writing beyond the paragraph level, as subject matter attempts to provide a holistic approach to teaching English. Techniques practiced in the writing assignments can be transferred to the students' future needs. With this approach, students can make sufficient progress, as measured by a discrete-point test, while also working on a needed but often neglected skill.

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CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

This study considers the effectiveness of a curriculum designed to focus on productive writing as the subject matter for teaching English in an intensive course at an advanced level to professionals from the public sector who need to improve their English ability. The population served by this particular course are professionals from a number of Egyptian ministries who have been selected by their ministries and sponsored by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), many of whom will be sent to the United States in the near future for either field or further academic training. The goal of this course is to increase their receptive and productive skills in English so that they can communicate more effectively in English and can benefit more significantly from their training in the United States.

Regarding the syllabus design which is the focal point of this current study, English for Science and Technology (EST) and English for Special Purposes (ESP) were not considered primarily because class composition is heterogeneous in that the students come from a variety of ministries. This specific population is relatively unique and might be described as a

new generation of EFL students. It consists of mature professionals with a variety of specialties. They have had between six and fourteen years of English training but still have problems with usage. The majority will be traveling to the United States for further field or academic training and will need a cultural input of "survival English." In addition, they must take a standardized test (ALIGU) and possibly TOEFL at the conclusion of their course.

The basic thrust of the syllabus is to enhance these students' further acquisition of English so that they can benefit from their training and adapt more easily to their new experience. Because of the number of years of English training they have already had, this researcher believed that the students would benefit more from a subject matter-based syllabus than from a grammar-based syllabus. This is in accord with Wilkins (1974) and Krashen (1982). Wilkins, in particular, points out that advanced students do not benefit significantly from an English class because it places them once again in the environment in which they had obviously not succeeded in the past. If they had, they would not be in it.

The notion of a subject matter approach is fully supported by Krashen (1982). He suggests a number of alternative approaches to teaching English at the advanced level including subject-matter teaching. In the area of subject-matter teaching,

a variety of courses have been suggested, such as introduction to law, American history, mathematics. These, however, are not feasible in the current situation here at the American University in Cairo, but it seemed possible to treat one of the skills itself as the subject matter.

This researcher believes that writing lends itself quite well to the role of subject matter. Some reasons for choosing writing were that this is a subject traditionally taught to native speakers; it is a subject which has largely been ignored in almost all EFL situations; these students would need at least rudimentary skills in writing in English during their training in the United States and possibly upon their return. Additionally, a careful analysis of writing models in terms of meaning and structure could teach these students something about those aspects of writing in English which are not the same in Arabic. This same analysis might also improve their reading skills in that they would learn to recognize the "signals" used by the writer in English. Perhaps most importantly, a carefully constructed series of writing assignments could cause the students to maximize their contact with the target language.

Wilkins (1974) says that more than twenty hours a week in the classroom is not productive. The syllabus in this study is based on fifteen hours a week in class. Wilkins, however, addresses the ESL situation. But when the student is not in

the environment of the target language, an effort must be made to create new opportunities and take advantage of existing ones outside the classroom for meaningful contact with native speakers in reasonably natural settings. Writing assignments are one way to assist this effort.

In the next chapter, a theory of language acquisition will be presented and general considerations will be discussed. Chapter Three will describe the productive writing subject-matter syllabus. In Chapter Four, two applications of this syllabus will be discussed in terms of procedures, progress, and problems. Progress will be evaluated with evidence presented for the effectiveness of the productive writing approach in comparison to the traditional grammar approach.

CHAPTER TWO

## A THEORY OF LANGUAGE ACQUISITION AND GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

This chapter discusses general considerations of the aims of instruction (the third "cornerstone of method" identified by Prator (1979)) as it relates to the specific population served by this study. In order to meet the aims of instruction, two concepts are considered essential: comprehension before production together with input for acquisition. A discussion of relevant methodologies follows. Finally, a theory of language acquisition is presented and some implications of this for the advanced student are suggested.

Theory and practice are mutually supportive. Theory must precede practice, for practice without theory is without direction. At the same time, theory must ultimately have practical application. This has been a major concern in the field of foreign language teaching throughout most of this century.

In line with this concern, Prator (1979) discusses three "cornerstones of method" and identifies them as: first, linguistics -- the nature of the language; second, psychology -- the nature of the learner; and third, aims of instruction -- what things the learner must be able to do in or with English (p. 15). The third, in Prator's view, is

considered to be more basic than the others, and it is the one with which this study is also concerned.

Before discussing what things the advanced learner within this specific population must be able to do in or with English, an assessment of his or her current level and abilities needs to be made. In general, this type of student has high receptive skills, high recognition ability, but medium to low productive skills. More specifically, the separate skills are assessed as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| Listening: | Reasonably high; more directed toward test situation; some fear (initially unexpressed) of inability to understand native speakers outside the classroom. |
| Reading: | Somewhat less limited than listening; fear factor not present; tends to be word-by-word reading rather than "chunked." |
| Speaking: | Fluency in communicative situations is uneven; again, some fear (largely unexpressed) of inability to be understood by native speakers. |
| Writing: | Some mechanics (spelling, punctuation, capitalization) present; little or no experience in producing "novel utterances" at or beyond the paragraph level. |

Based upon the above assessment of skills and upon the characteristics of the population involved (described earlier), some considerations for the syllabus design emerge.

Primarily, concentration needs to be shifted from further rule-getting to using the language. Next, writing appears to be the most fertile skill area for progress. Also, by shifting the focus from form to meaning, it might be possible to either bypass or alleviate the students' unspoken fears of understanding and being understood by native speakers. And finally, the type of students here requires a practical approach, one which has an obvious application to those things they must be able to do in or with English.

Aims of instruction must be both short and long term; they must reflect the students' basic concerns. From the short-term point of view, these students have to show a significant improvement in language usage and listening comprehension by means of a discrete-point test upon completion of the course. They are, in many instances, in competition with other candidates for training opportunities in the United States, and their gains are a factor in the selection process.

Long-term concerns are several. After selection, these students have to be able to communicate sufficiently in English with native speakers and comprehend English sufficiently in order to benefit from the training experience. They may also be required by USAID to write reports, summaries, and/or evaluations in English at one or more points

in their training program. There is some concern regarding being able to adapt while in the United States with a minimum of culture shock. Finally, they should be able to continue effective use of English upon their return in terms of research, reading, and communicating.

On the basis of the above analysis, this researcher felt that the syllabus design should center around productive writing at and beyond the paragraph level. Also, ways of providing additional natural input for further language acquisition were needed. By focusing on the meaning of such natural input rather than on form, it was believed that the affective factor of fear could be alleviated. At the same time, the basic premise is that writing in English is stylistically different from writing in Arabic and should be treated as a new skill, given these students' lack of experience in this area. Consequently, in treating writing as a new skill, the principle of comprehension before production was considered essential and was applied in the syllabus design.

## Comprehension Before Production

Work on comprehension of productive writing should begin not with writing but with reading. However, watching even advanced level students read is instructive. Given a paragraph to read, they bring out pencils or pens to use as cursors as they move word by word through the selection. Any

unfamiliar word is routinely underlined. While this procedure is helpful in locating words for vocabulary building, it is not conducive to reading for main ideas or for an awareness of style. Consequently, their attention needs to be directed to two basic questions: What is the writer saying? And, how does the writer say it? The first question is concerned with meaning, and the second with form. Form, here, includes both style and structure as they affect meaning. Until these two questions have been explored in some depth for comprehension, acceptable production cannot be expected.

This position is consistent with recent developments in EFL methodologies which have utilized comprehension-based teaching approaches modeled on first-language acquisition. In particular, Asher's Total Physical Response (TPR) (1969), Winitz's The Learnables (Winitz 1981), and Gary and Gary's comprehension-based syllabus (1981) emphasize the value of large amounts of aural input and the delay of oral production. While these approaches focus primarily at the beginner level and are initially concerned with aural/oral skills, the basic theory of comprehension preceding production is applicable to the situation under study here.

Input for Acquisition

Students at this level are especially capable of handling and processing far more input than is available to them

during class time. Also, the students with whom this study is concerned need to expand their tolerance for roughly-tuned input, that is, input containing unfamiliar structures and vocabulary, before their arrival in the United States. How, then, can these students' contact with English be maximized, that is, expanded beyond the classroom and class time? And, how can their comprehension of this input be assessed? These questions arise from a concern for providing as "linguistically rich" a learning environment as is possible in an EFL setting.

A number of resources exist here in Egypt for additional input (radio, newspapers, television, the foreign community, tourists, AUC itself, etc.), but they are not usually utilized in conjunction with the formal learning situation. Consequently, the syllabus design in this study attempts to tap some of these available resources in as natural a way as possible, both in and out of the classroom.

The notion of greatly expanded input is basic to a number of acquisition-based approaches, particularly those of Curran, Lozanov, and Terrell. With these approaches, the input data are not preselected, graded, or sequenced. More importantly, these approaches are also concerned with getting the learner to lower his or her affective filter in order to allow acquisition to occur, or for input to become intake.

In Curran's Community Language Learning (CLL) approach, much of the input is generated by the student/client who presumes the group's understanding. Intervention by the teacher/counselor occurs whenever help is required or communication is obscured by errors or for the addition of idioms and "more elegant constructions" (Curran in Blair, 1982:123). In other words, the focus is on meaning first. The relationship between client and counselor is one of empathy.

Lozanov views the student as a whole person who possesses a multitude of untapped reserves for language-getting. His approach, Suggestopedia, works on the principle of a combined process operating within the student of simultaneously occurring analysis and synthesis, a principle of unity. The massive input is provided for the student's choice within what Lozanov terms "the limited sphere of consciousness but also, simultaneously and to a fuller extent, in the various and numerous levels of paraconsciousness" (Lozanov in Blair, 1982:146). Lozanov's implicit respect for the student and for the student's untapped language-getting reserves manifests itself in his approach as confidence: confidence in the student's abilities, on the part of the student, on the part of the teacher, and confidence generated through the interaction of students, method, and teacher.

One of the overriding considerations in Terrell's Natural Approach is to make the student feel at ease during activities in the classroom because, as Terrell claims, "affective (not cognitive) factors are primary forces operating in language acquisition" (Terrell in Blair, 1982:163). In addition, he suggests that communicative competence rather than grammatical perfection should be the goal of beginning language instruction and that students should be given the opportunity to acquire language. In this last regard, Terrell sees class activities as appropriate for acquisition and homework assignments for learning.

In summary, the input aspects of the syllabus design in this study (discussed in Chapter Three) are in line with the above discussed approaches in that such input is to a large extent student generated. Moreover, the syllabus design is based upon a confidence in the students' ability to process roughly-tuned input, is concerned with communicative competence in productive writing more than with grammatical perfection, and encourages the seeking out of opportunities available to the students outside the classroom for additional natural input for further language acquisition.

Affective Factor of Fear

As mentioned earlier, the basic fear of this type of student centers around understanding and being understood

by native speakers other than the teacher. In order to overcome this fear and to prepare for writing assignments to follow, situations need to be found where this student can hear the language in a reasonably natural setting with the security of shared knowledge to draw upon and in a non-threatening environment. This researcher believes that once the student is in this type of environment, his or her concentration can be shifted from form to meaning, thus allowing for acquisition to take place and communication to occur.

This two-pronged fear of understanding and being understood calls for a comprehension-based approach. One way to do this is to make use of radio news broadcasts in English (to which the teacher also listens) as daily listening assignments to be reported on later in class. In this way, the student is listening to a variety of native speakers and drawing upon shared knowledge of current events while not worrying about the possibility of being required to respond at that moment. The student's report is considered on the basis of accuracy of comprehended meaning rather than of grammatical perfection.

Another way to provide for comprehension is through dialogue centered around a topic familiar to and of interest to the student. This takes the form of a guest lecturer in the classroom and a question and answer period following the presentation.

The guest lecturer provides sufficient comprehensible input to generate questions from the students and discussion, all of which are concerned with the meaning of the ideas expressed rather than with the form of the language used.

It might be argued that writing itself raises anxiety. However, Krashen points out (1982:168) that anxiety in subject matter courses is directed at the subject matter itself rather than at the language in which it is being taught. He further points out that one of the ways of keeping the language portion of such a class relatively anxiety-free is by not demanding full grammatical accuracy from the students. And full grammatical accuracy is not the major criterion in the writing assignments here; rather, it is meaning as expressed by means of organization and content. Furthermore, there is no writing subtest in the ALIGU test these students have to take.

Concurrent with the trend toward student-centered approaches in recent years, attention has also been given to theories of second language acquisition. One of the simplest and strongest statements in this area has been made by Stephen Krashen. In the following section, several of his theories consistent with the productive writing subject-matter syllabus will be discussed.

The Monitor Model and the Input Hypothesis

In the 1970's, the monitor model and the input hypothesis were formulated by Krashen. These form the basis of his theory of second language acquisition. His recently available work, Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition (1982), provides an overview of his theories as well as their applications to language teaching. The following discussion draws heavily upon this work.

The Monitor Model

The monitor model proposes two processes of language-getting: acquisition and learning. It further posits that acquisition and learning are used in very specific ways. Figure 1 models this process.

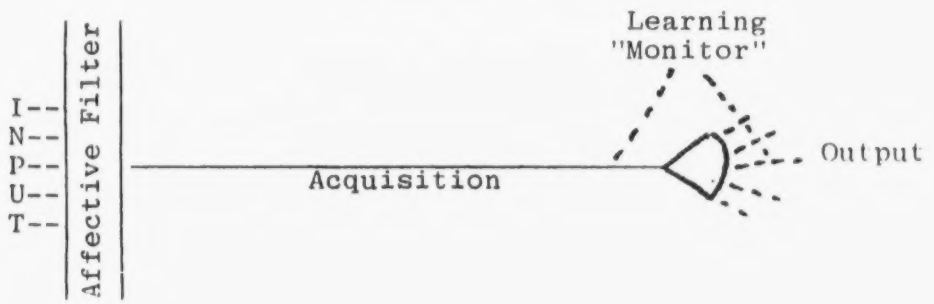


Figure 1. The Monitor Model

According to Krashen, acquisition is concerned with the natural development of fluency which he posits is similar to the process used by children in mastering their native tongue.

In terms of second language, Krashen does not suggest that native-like proficiency results in the adult, but only that the ability to acquire language remains long past puberty (p. 10). Since, according to Krashen, acquisition is a subconscious process, the acquirer is only conscious of using language for communicative purposes but not of the rules of usage.

Within the monitor hypothesis, learning is the domain of formal rules and, as such, plays only a limited role in second language performance. Learning is defined by Krashen as the "conscious knowledge of a second language, knowing the rules, being aware of them and being able to talk about them" (p. 10). The function of this learned competence is to monitor, that is, edit and correct, output through the application of conscious rules. However, for monitoring to occur, three conditions are necessary to be met:

1. Time -- to think about using conscious rules effectively.
2. Focus on form -- performer also needs to be focused on form in order to check for correctness.
3. Knowledge of the rule -- performer must have a knowledge of the rule or rules involved.

As shown in Figure 1 above, the monitor can be brought into play before or after production. According to Krashen, the most effective use of the monitor is made in discrete-point grammar

tests. He also states that conscious use of the monitor can allow the performer to supply items not yet acquired (p. 17).

Both learning and acquisition can be enhanced or inhibited by affective variables. In his model, Krashen proposes the presence of an affective filter (posited by Dulay and Burt in 1977) through which input passes (see Figure 1). Some of the factors influencing the filter include motivation, classroom environment, attitude toward the target language and culture, self-confidence, and the nature of the input. Therefore, the affective filter is an extremely important factor in that learning and acquisition will vary according to the strength or level of the student's affective filter.

The Input Hypothesis

The input hypothesis is concerned with how language is acquired and how progress can be made in acquisition. Krashen uses the concept of "i + 1," where i represents the current level of competence and i + 1 represents the next level of competence. He claims that "a necessary (but not sufficient) condition to move from stage i to stage i + 1 is that the acquirer understand input that contains i + 1, where "understand" means that the acquirer is focussed on the meaning and not the form of the message" (p. 21). The acquirer is able to understand what has not yet been acquired through the use of context, knowledge of the world, and extra-linguistic information. The input hypothesis says

that acquisition occurs by "going for the meaning" first and that structure follows (p. 21).

Another part of the input hypothesis says that input need not contain only i + 1. When communication is successful, and when there is plenty of input, i + 1 is automatically provided. Consequently, roughly-tuned input should also be made available in an acquisition-based approach. Production ability emerges over time. According to this part of the input hypothesis, "the best way, and perhaps the only way, to teach speaking ... is simply to provide comprehensible input" (p. 22).

In summing up, the four main points of the input hypothesis are:

1. The input hypothesis relates to acquisition, not learning.
2. We acquire by understanding language that contains structure a bit beyong our current level of competence (i + 1), by using extra-lingual cues.
3. When communication is successful, when the input is understood and there is enough of it, i + 1 will be provided automatically.
4. Production ability emerges. It is not taught directly (pp. 21-22).

Implications for the Advanced Student

In terms of the monitor model, both acquisition and learning situations must be provided for the advanced student. While

Krashen states that learning does not become acquisition, Stevick (1978) suggests that "seepage" does occur. In any event, the adult second language learner does have the ability to acquire language as well as to learn it. Consequently, a syllabus at this level must provide input for the two systems.

There is general agreement that the classroom can provide sufficient input especially at the beginner level and even into the intermediate level. However, at the advanced level, both Krashen (1982) and Wilkins (1974) suggest that input for acquisition is minimal and consequently boredom can set in. Wilkins describes the situation confronting the teacher at this level:

> Faced with learners who are returning to the task of acquiring a language, perhaps after a space of some years, the teacher has a number of problems. If they are returning to learn a language which they have previously been taught, there is the fact that they have, presumably, not been entirely successful in the previous learning. Will the teacher, therefore, simply repeat what was taught before in much the same way as it was taught before? . . . He might prefer to activate what knowledge they have, to eradicate their incorrect learning and to extend their knowledge further by adopting different organization and different methods so that the learning experience is a new and fresh one (pp. 51-52).

To provide a new and fresh learning experience by adopting different organization and different methods for this level student, Krashen suggests that subject matter courses taught in the target language can be a viable alternative. While

Krashen discusses subject-matter teaching in terms of history, civics, mathematics, etc., no mention is made of writing.

Using productive writing as subject matter, two types of input are required. The first concerns what might be called the mechanics of rhetoric together with an examination of appropriate models. This corresponds to the emphasis upon listening comprehension materials in current comprehension-based instruction. The second type involves the gathering of the necessary information by the student for the actual writing assignments. At this point, such input comes from outside the classroom through reading and interviewing. The language in such input would appear to satisfy the requirements for acquisition as suggested in Krashen's input hypothesis. In most cases, the written output can show how well meaning has been understood.

This chapter has discussed principles upon which the productive writing syllabus is based. Aims of instruction have been considered from the perspective of current level of abilities of this particular population and from their short- and long-term needs. These needs call for a syllabus which provides for comprehension preceding production while allowing for input for acquisition. These aims are in accord with a number of student-centered approaches. A theory of second language acquisition has been presented along with implications of it for the advanced student.

The principles and theories presented in this chapter underlie the practical approach of the productive writing syllabus to be discussed in the next chapter. Also, the general situation in which this approach has been applied will be described along with a focus on productive writing.

CHAPTER THREE

# THE PRODUCTIVE WRITING SUBJECT-MATTER SYLLABUS

In the preceding chapter, aims of instruction were discussed. An assessment of the current level of abilities and potential needs of the advanced student was made. It was suggested that treating a skill (writing) as subject matter would need to adopt the principle of comprehension preceding production while also providing opportunities for input for acquisition. It was shown that this is in line with a number of innovative approaches. Finally, a theory of language acquisition and its implications for the advanced student were presented.

The productive writing subject-matter syllabus with which this study is concerned will be discussed in this chapter. A rationale for the specific writing will be presented, and the general situation of the population served by this study follows.

## General Situation

USAID in association with a number of Egyptian ministries sponsors intensive English for employees from these ministries in order to upgrade their English abilities. These students constitute a new generation of EFL students, one which is increasing rapidly. This new generation is markedly different from the general type of EFL students in that the members of

this new generation are more mature. They are professionals who are already reasonably well-established in their fields and who know the need of improving their English abilities for use in their work. While their level of proficiency in English is not at the university level, they have something of value to say. This new generation has experiential maturity and linguistic immaturity. This dichotomy is important in that it requires different methods and techniques as well as a different empathy from the teacher.

Wilkins (1974) points out that the traditional, structured grammar syllabus can have a negative effect on the advanced student in that it is emphasizing material the student has covered unsuccessfully one or more times in the past; it serves to remind him or her of past failures. In the situation here, the students have usually had a minimum of six years of English. While there has been some attention given to writing, the Thanawiyya Amma composition test now requires the student to write only five sentences of no more than eight lines using the vocabulary supplied. Consequently, writing suggests itself as potentially useful for subject matter teaching.

Focus on Productive Writing

For the purposes of this study, productive writing is defined as free writing of one or more paragraphs of factual matter. Because the subjects are mature professionals, emphasis

is on the type of writing in English they can reasonably expect to do: reports, memoranda, and summaries.

This study suggests that the basic context of teaching productive writing is the paragraph. The paragraph is long enough to illustrate points to be covered without being too cumbersome. Here, the topic sentence and varieties of supporting sentences are explored. Work on sentences is essential. But it must be in context rather than in isolation, and the context is the paragraph.

Much of the literature describes the paragraph as a composition in miniature. (Christensen, 1967; McCrimmon, 1963; Murray, 1968; Rivers and Temperley, 1978.) Consequently, writing input concentrates on the development of paragraphs on the basis of specific types of supporting sentences. These include: examples, details, anecdotes, facts, and statistics; enumeration, process, and chronology; cause and effect; and comparison and contrast.

English grammar stresses events in time and the relationships between them in time more so, perhaps, than does Arabic. And the English-speaking businessman is also concerned with time. Paradoxically, this same person is not usually interested in a straight chronological report. Therefore, different methods of organization are explored. Such organizational methods include presenting information ranked in order of

ascending, descending, and equal importance. The techniques involved here are readily transferrable to the writing task beyond the paragraph level

Some of the model paragraphs used also show how they can be expanded into longer compositions (Arnaudet and Barrett, (1981:179). For example, a model paragraph is presented and then followed by a composition. Each sentence of the paragraph has become either the topic sentence or the subject of each paragraph in the composition. At the same time, it can also be shown through reversing the expansion process in these same models how to summarize an article. This researcher believes article summary is important for two reasons. First, summarizing is a necessary skill for anyone involved in research, and many of these students are. Second, it is believed that learning to summarize can aid reading comprehension since a good summary contains the essence of an article. The writing of a summary can demonstrate the student's comprehension in a concrete form.

Moving from paragraph development, the traditional composition formula is: introduction, body, and conclusion. While this formula needs to be learned, it must also for this group be made practical. They are not writing compositions; they are writing memoranda and reports. Therefore, the writing input described above is interpreted in terms of usefulness for their prospective writing needs.

Writing has an abstract quality not present in the other skills which, as Rivers (1978) states, is intensified by:

> 1. its complete detachment from expressive features, such as facial or body movement, pitch and tone of voice, hesitations or speed of delivery, and emotional indicators such as heightened facial color or variation in breathing;
>
> 2. its lack of material context: surroundings, feedback from interlocutors, relevant movement (hence the attraction of the comic book for the modern readers);
>
> 3. its displacement in time: a written communication may be read as soon as it is written (like a note slipped to a companion) or months, years, or centuries later . . . (p. 263).

Because writing is performed in a void, so to speak, the writer must compensate for the missing elements through the inclusion of explanatory details which the speaker would omit, but which are necessary for the reader's understanding. There can be no assumption of shared knowledge between the writer and reader. Perhaps the greatest problem is that the writer does not get instant feedback from the reader in terms of questions for clarification, quizzical or blank looks, or expressions of agreement or disagreement. Also, stress must be expressed differently since intonation is lacking in writing. This is supplied by the reader. A variety of sentence patterns and language is more necessary in writing than in speaking,

thus possibly requiring a larger repertoire on the part of the writer.

While the differences between written and spoken language may be problems, they are also challenges and opportunities for the advanced student. Productive writing as such can help to meet the challenge of the repeating students through the new materials and input writing provides. It can reinforce their previous learning while also expanding it. Writing is readily understood as a necessary skill. Additionally, it provides a unique opportunity to focus on meaning, thereby allowing structure to follow.

## The Syllabus

The following discussion concerns the order of activities and the structure of the daily class as well as a description of activities and materials used. The weekly syllabus is presented in Appendix A in detail.

### Activities

The order of activities in the syllabus is: listening, speaking, grammar, reading, and writing. In general, this deliberate sequencing is based upon comprehension before production. Specifically, it provides, first, listening input for spoken output; next, a grammar component is presented to assist the student's monitor; and finally, a reading input is

examined for comprehension as well as for content, organization, and style prior to a discussion of aspects of writing as output. On the basis of a three-hour class day, the time per activity breaks down as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| 30-40 minutes | News of the day and discussion. |
| 40-45 minutes | Grammar. Discuss written versus oral usage, impact of grammar upon meaning, check and explain assignments. |
| 40-45 minutes | Reading. Check for comprehension and discuss style, content, and organization of reading selection. Work on vocabulary. |
| 40-45 minutes | Writing. Explain, discuss, and review writing tasks. |

One day a week, students have an hour in the Listening Lab. It takes the place of the "news of the day and discussion" period. The schedule of the other activities remains the same.

The typical day begins with a discussion of the news of the day. This requires the students to listen to the news in English on the radio in order to report on it in class. The BBC is specifically recommended because of the frequency of news broadcasts, its objectivity, range of coverage, and excellence of writing. News was selected for a discussion of current events rather than other possible topics, such as students' personal lives for a variety of reasons. First, the teacher

has access to the same input as the students and can check on their listening comprehension. Second, the news provides roughly-tuned input. Next, it involves a wider range of vocabulary and structures than does personal information. Finally, it avoids the problem of possibly intimate revelations or comments which do not belong in the classroom. The news provides opportunities for comments by the other students or teacher and the supplying of background information. Discussion generated here also permits a cultural input. Through this type of activity, the students receive a minimum of a half an hour daily of listening input outside of class.

Because these students face a discrete-point test (ALIGU and possibly TOEFL) at the end of the course, a specific grammar component is included here for the course to have additional face validity for these students. However, the emphasis in this component is on meaning and explanation rather than on rules per se, and is constantly related to aspects of writing. Differences between spoken and written English are stressed. Errors are examined in terms of their effect upon meaning.

Next, selected reading comprehension materials have been specifically chosen for their meaning, restatement and inference value. In conjunction with reading, vocabulary building is worked on here as it relates to both reading comprehension and writing.

Finally, the writing portion of the day is basically divided into two stages. During the first half of the course, attention is entirely focused on aspects of paragraph development for comprehension purposes. Types of structures and connectives used for such purposes as comparison and contrast, process, chronology, etc. are examined. During the second half of the course, the focus shifts to include actual productive writing assignments. These are done weekly outside of class. Because the assignments are not creative writing, they provide additional input through the use of the reading, listening, and speaking skills. A list of the assignments appears in Appendix B together with a list of the materials needed for them and the purposes to be served by them.

Materials

In general, materials are designed to focus on one skill while involving other skills as well. For example, much of the listening input is for the purpose of providing input for speaking and writing. The idea is to keep input flowing alternately between skills.

Listening materials include natural input in the form of news broadcasts as discussed earlier. Other natural input includes a guest native speaker from one of the other disciplines, such as sociology, political science, or mass communication,

who is invited to one of the classes. The guest speaks for about an hour that day on a subject familiar to the class (for example, "Women in the Egyptian Parliament"). This presentation is followed by a question and answer or discussion period. Additionally, it is used as the basis of one of the writing assignments. Another form of listening input is provided through the gathering of oral responses to a survey question. These responses again are the basis for another writing assignment in which the students organize the responses into general categories. Finally, specific listening materials such as Listening in the Real World (Rost and Stratton, 1978) and/or TOEFL preparation testing tapes are used in the listening lab for test taking purposes.

During the grammar portion, focus of the textbook used, Understanding and Using English Grammar (Azar, 1981), is on explanation rather than on rules. Distinctions between spoken and written usage are made. The impact of structure on meaning is also stressed.

Reading materials come from several sources. Students are expected to read The Egyptian Gazette regularly. Selected editorials from this newspaper are also used for discussion, comprehension, and analysis of writing style, content, and organization. As one writing assignment, students read and summarize an article written in English Additionally, seven selections from Reader's Choice (Baudoin, et al., 1977) have been chosen.

These entail reading for the main idea and sentence study for restatement and inference. These selections are especially useful for stressing meaning, recycling grammar, and generating discussion. The specific selections appear in the syllabus in Appendix A.

Finally, for the foundation of productive writing in English, the textbook selected is Paragraph Development (Arnaudet and Barrett, 1981). According to the authors, this book was written to bridge the gap between sentence and composition and is aimed at the high intermediate to advanced students. It has the added advantage of simplicity while avoiding an assumption of the EFL students' knowledge of culture-specific situations in the writing exercises.

In this chapter, the productive writing subject-matter syllabus has been discussed from the standpoint of the general situation of the students for which it was designed. Next, productive writing was discussed as the focus of the syllabus. The interaction between materials and sequenced activities has been shown.

Chapter Four discusses two applications of the productive writing approach during the 1983-84 academic year. An evaluation of these two approaches will be presented followed by the conclusions of this researcher and suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER FOUR

## EVALUATION AND CONCLUSIONS

In this study, this researcher was working with intact groups selected and assigned by the procedure used regularly by USAID in its overall contract with the American University in Cairo for the provision of English instruction. Five groups at the advanced level were involved, two of which were taught by this researcher using the syllabus which is the focus of this study.

This researcher was assigned the groups to teach rather than given a choice of groups. None of the subjects were volunteers for the particular courses taught by this researcher. It was not possible to control for selection through randomizing assignment of subjects between the groups.

The long established use by USAID of the ALIGU test for both placement purposes and evaluation lends itself to the quasi-experimental nonequivalent control group design. This is the design used by this researcher. As Tuckman (1978) points out, there are few opportunities in the real world of the classroom for a true experimental design since the educational researcher is too often confronted with real limitations upon

his or her ability to select or assign subjects and manipulate conditions. Consequently, quasi-experimental designs have been in widespread use in educational research for these reasons since the 1960s.

During the 1983-84 academic year, the productive writing subject-matter syllabus was used by this researcher in the Division of Commercial and Industrial Training (CIT) with two advanced level classes. These classes were within the CIT portion of the contract USAID has with the American University in Cairo to provide English language training. The procedures, progress, and problems experienced will be discussed in this chapter. Later, an evaluation will be made of the progress through a comparison with three comparable advanced level groups which used a grammar-based syllabus. Finally, suggestions for further research will be made, and conclusions will be presented.

Two Applications: Procedures, Progress, Problems

Fundamental to the applications of the syllabus was the hypothesis that productive writing as subject matter of an advanced level English course would significantly improve the subjects' general proficiency in English. This hypothesis will be examined in this section.

It was further hypothesized that a subject matter-based syllabus would be more effective than the traditional grammar-based syllabus in improving the subjects' general proficiency

in English at the advanced level. This will be examined in a later section.

A. Sample

Twenty-two students selected from various Egyptian ministries and assigned by USAID to two advanced level English courses served as the subjects for this study. Because the subjects were selected and assigned prior to the start of classes, they constitute intact groups. All of the subjects had previously had a minimum of six years of English.

The sample was divided by USAID into two groups: Advanced Technical English (Group A) and Advanced Academic English (Group B). Group A consisted of fourteen students, five women and nine men, ranging in age from twenty-seven to fifty-six. Group B consisted of eight students, all men, ranging in age from twenty-seven to thirty-three. This latter group had initially had more subjects, but eight were not notified of their placement and two were dropped because they had not been fully released from their work to attend full time.

All students entering this level had taken the ALIGU test utilized by USAID worldwide and were at the proficiency level determined by this instrument. The assignment of the two groups was determined by USAID on the basis of the type of training in the United States for which these students were preparing. Those going for field training were assigned to Group A while

those going for further academic training were assigned to Group B.

B. 1. Instrumentation

Student proficiency was measured by the ALIGU test. The ALIGU was developed by the American Language Institute of Georgetown University, Washington, D. C. for the Agency for International Development (USAID) and the International Communication Agency (ICA) for use abroad in rating the English proficiency of proposed candidates for USAID training programs and of applicants for U.S. Government grants and student visas. "Cutting points" have been established by the sponsoring Government agencies on the basis both of field experience with thousands of candidates over a number of years and of concurrent-validity studies carried out by the ALIGU Test Development Staff.

This test consists of three subtests: usage, listening, comprehension, and reading and vocabulary. In addition to scores for these separate subtests, there are two other scores available: an average of usage and listening (GT 1/2) and an average of usage, listening, and reading and vocabulary (GT 1/3).

The usage subtest has 100 three-choice items, all of the same style. The time limit is 60 minutes after directions have been given, and the scoring procedure is the number right minus

1/2 the number wrong. The listening subtest has 40 four-choice items. Students are allowed 20 seconds to select each answer after hearing the test utterance; approximate testing time is 25 minutes. The scoring procedure is the number of items answered correctly, converted to percentages. The reading and vocabulary subtest has 60 four-choice items covering general vocabulary (25 items), idioms (10 items), and reading comprehension (25 items). Time allowed is 60 minutes, and the scoring procedure is the number of items answered correctly, converted to percentages.

The ALIGU test was used to measure progress of the subjects of this study. The reading and vocabulary subtest is given only to those candidates for further academic training; consequently, Group A did not take this subtest. Therefore, only those measurements common to the two groups will be considered. The ALIGU test was administered on a pretest-posttest basis, with an equivalent form being used for the posttesting. The pretest was given several months in advance to allow time for selection and assignment by USAID. The posttest was given the day after completion of the course of study. Both tests were administered and graded in the English Language Institute of the American University in Cairo.

B. 2. Equipment

Both groups met in classrooms located in the DPS building on the New Campus: Group A in the Occidental Room and Group B in Room 212. Both groups had approximately one hour weekly in the Listening Lab on the New Campus. This room is equipped with a console tape player, with a reel-to-reel apparatus. Students used individual ear phones which produced a clear, high quality sound. Both groups were taught by this researcher, an American native-speaker of English.

C. Procedures

This study was conducted during the 1983-84 academic year. Group A met between 9:00 a.m. and 12:00 noon from September 25 through November 23, 1983, and Group B between 9:00 a.m. and 12:00 noon from January 2 through February 23, 1984. Both groups received approximately 120 hours of instruction over an eight-week period.

On the basis of a three-hour day, the time per activity was as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| 30-40 minutes | News of the day and discussion. |
| 40-45 minutes | Grammar. |
| 40-45 minutes | Reading. |
| 40-45 minutes | Writing. |

The time in the listening lab took the place of the "news

of the day and discussion" period. The schedule of the other activities remained the same.

Both groups were taught by means of the productive writing syllabus designed by this researcher and followed the procedures described in Chapter Three. Both groups used the same textbooks and listening materials mentioned in Chapter Three. Group B had three tapes for listening comprehension from Cliffs TOEFL Preparation Guide (Pyle and Muñoz, 1982) not used by Group A. And since the students in Group B were also being tested for reading and vocabulary, they had an additional textbook, Breaking the Word Barrier (Gilbert, 1972). Exercises from this were used to introduce the writing portion of the day.

At the end of the course, the students were tested for progress as described above. The data were analyzed, and a discussion of progress and problems follows. The results are further evaluated later.

D. Progress

Data from the posttest ALIGU test administered to both groups were compared with the data from their pretest ALIGU test. Means of pretest and posttest scores and gains, together with standard deviations, are shown below in Table 1 for usage, listening, and the average of these two (GT 1/2).

In general, Table 1 shows much higher gains for Group A than for Group B. These are 18.79 usage, 12.64 listening, and 15.79 GT 1/2 for Group A, and 7.13 usage, 9.0 listening, and 7.88 GT 1/2 for Group B. However, Group A's pretest scores were about ten points lower in the three sets of scores. These are 64.07 usage, 63.0 listening, and 63.64 GT 1/2 for Group A as opposed to 74.31 usage, 73.0 listening, and 74.0 GT 1/2 for Group B. Consequently, Group B's smaller gains may be attributable to a ceiling effect. At the same time, Table 1 shows the gains for both groups in all three sets of scores to be highly significant.

Table 1.

Means and Standard Deviations of Pretest and Posttest Scores and Gains of Productive Writing Groups A and B on the ALIGU.

(N: A = 14; B = 8)

| Test | Group | Pretest Mean | Pretest SD | Posttest Mean | Posttest SD | Gains Mean | Gains SD | T-Value | Significance Level |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Usage | A | 64.07 | 14.76 | 82.86 | 8.29 | 18.79 | 10.70 | 6.36 | .0005 |
| | B | 74.31 | 9.32 | 81.44 | 5.86 | 7.13 | 5.70 | 3.55 | .005 |
| Listening | A | 63.0 | 11.05 | 75.64 | 8.71 | 12.64 | 9.42 | 4.92 | .0005 |
| | B | 73.0 | 8.25 | 82.0 | 6.55 | 9.00 | 6.86 | 3.70 | .005 |
| GT 1/2 | A | 63.64 | 5.53 | 79.43 | 5.49 | 15.79 | 6.54 | 8.49 | .0005 |
| | B | 74.0 | 3.96 | 81.88 | 3.34 | 7.88 | 3.09 | 7.23 | .0005 |

Looking at the standard deviations in the pretest and posttest scores for both groups in all three sets of scores provides an additional comment concerning progress. In all cases, the posttest standard deviation is smaller than that of the pretest, and in some cases considerably so. This indicates that both groups remained homogeneous or became more so after the treatment. Table 2 below extrapolates these data from Table 1.

Table 2.

Standard Deviations of Pretest and Posttest Scores of Productive Writing Groups A and B on the ALIGU.

(N: A = 14; B = 8)

| Test | Group | Pretest SD | Posttest SD |
|---|---|---|---|
| Usage | A | 14.76 | 8.29 |
| | B | 9.32 | 5.86 |
| Listening | A | 11.05 | 8.71 |
| | B | 8.25 | 6.55 |
| GT 1/2 | A | 5.53 | 5.49 |
| | B | 3.96 | 3.34 |

In terms of the GT 1/2 gains, both groups realized good growth. The "z" score change here (the gain from pretest to posttest divided by the pretest standard deviation) is 2.85 for Group A and 1.99 for Group B. Since an increase of one standard deviation over a school year is considered acceptable progress

in any skill (Henning in Schleppergrell, 1982), the progress shown by both groups must be interpreted as extremely good growth.

These results, then, fully support the first hypothesis.

E. Problems

Several problems were encountered with Group B. Because these students had been selected for further academic training in the United States, they were also preparing for the TOEFL test. Several had scheduled themselves to take the TOEFL during their course, while the others were planning to take it several weeks after the end of the course. Consequently, they were facing two discrete-point tests (ALIGU and TOEFL) and were obsessively test-oriented. In the beginning, several were demanding that discrete-point tests be given during class time regularly and often.

Daily news reports, as described in Chapter Three, were expected from the students as a means of checking their listening comprehension. However, one student attempted to prevent this activity by asking several of his colleagues (outside of class) not to "waste" everyone's class time with their reports.

The sample size of Group B was much smaller than anticipated. Originally, eighteen had been nominated and placed, but eight did not receive notification of their placement, and two

more were dropped because of work conflicts. Lack of notification was undoubtedly due to the holidays preceding the start for Group B (January 2).

Commuting was a problem. One student commuted daily from Tanta, which meant that he spent at least five hours daily travelling; however, he did not miss any time from class. On the other hand, one student living near Heliopolis was consistently late for a total of ten hours of class time. Since absences totaling twelve hours automatically cause a student to be dropped from the course, he was persuaded to leave his home earlier in order to get to class on time.

Several students were only partially released from work. One had to work twenty hours a week for his ministry in Port Said on the weekends. And another was required to report to his office first thing every day which resulted in his missing a total of eleven hours.

Therefore, in light of these problems, the gains achieved by Group B, despite being lower than those of Group A, are all the more impressive.

Thus far, progress has been shown to be considerable for both groups in terms of their gains. Also, both groups remained homogeneous or became more so after the treatment. Growth, in terms of the GT 1/2 scores, was shown to be extremely good. The results shown above fully support the first hypothesis.

It was further hypothesized that a subject matter-based syllabus would be more effective than the traditional grammar-based syllabus in improving the subjects' general proficiency in English at the advanced level. In order to test this hypothesis, results from three comparable groups using a grammar-based syllabus will be presented and compared with those of the two productive writing groups.

F. Comparison Groups

Within the CIT portion of the USAID contract during the 1983-84 academic year, three other courses were taught at the advanced level. A traditional grammar-based syllabus with a test orientation emphasis was used to prepare these students for both the ALIGU and the TOEFL tests. For the purposes of this study, these three groups are designated Comparison Groups C, D, and E. Again, the subjects for these courses were arbitrarily assigned by USAID prior to the start of classes based on their pretest ALIGU scores and, therefore, constitute intact groups also.

Comparison Groups C and E were taught by the same teacher, an Egyptian non-native speaker of English. Comparison group D was taught by an American native speaker.

Subjects in the the three groups came from a variety of Egyptian ministries and were candidates for further academic training in the United States. Comparison Group C consisted of two women and twelve men, a total of fourteen students, ranging

in age from twenty-three to thirty-six; Comparison Group D had sixteen students, two women and fourteen men, ranging in age from twenty-four to thirty-nine; and Comparison Group E comprised eleven students, two women and nine men, between the ages of twenty-four and thirty-eight.

Comparison Group C met from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. between September 25 and November 23, 1983. Comparison Group D met from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon between October 30 and December 28, 1983. Comparison Group E met from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon between November 27, 1983 and January 26, 1984. Regular classrooms in the DPS building on the New Campus were used.

The comparison groups used the same textbooks as the productive writing groups (including Breaking the Word Barrier) with the exception of Paragraph Development. In lieu of writing, emphasis was given to TOEFL preparation materials in the areas of listening, grammar, and vocabulary so that time on task was equal for all five groups.

Testing procedures were identical for all five groups: the pretest ALIGU test was administered several months in advance and served as a placement criterion. The posttest ALIGU test was given one day after the completion of the courses. These tests were administered and graded in the English Language Institute of the American University in Cairo.

G. Results

Data from the posttest ALIGU tests were compared with the data from the pretest ALIGU tests. Means of the pretest and posttest scores and gains, together with standard deviations, are shown below in Table 3 for Comparison Groups C, D, and E for usage, listening, and the average of these two scores (GT 1/2). For some reason, half of the subjects in Comparison Group C did not take the reading and vocabulary subtest on the pretest ALIGU. Therefore, the partial scores available for this subtest do not appear in Table 3 but will be considered separately later.

In general, the results show that the approach of a grammar-based syllabus with a test orientation was highly effective with these three groups. Looking at the gains achieved, it can be seen that they are quite significant. Furthermore, in terms of the GT 1/2 gains, good growth was realized all groups. The "z" score change here is 1.58 for Group C, 2.55 for Group D, and 2.14 for Group E. All of these results will be looked at separately later.

Table 3.

Means and Standard Deviations of Pretest and Posttest Scores and Gains of Comparison Groups C, D, and E on the ALIGU Test.

(N: C = 14; D = 16; E = 11)

| Test | Group | Pretest Mean | Pretest SD | Posttest Mean | Posttest SD | Gains Mean | Gains SD | T-Value | Significance Level |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Usage | C | 59.29 | 8.74 | 69.68 | 12.44 | 10.39 | 9.90 | 3.94 | .005 |
| | D | 73.44 | 8.13 | 82.53 | 10.03 | 9.09 | 8.78 | 4.00 | .005 |
| | E | 69.91 | 8.0 | 79.82 | 10.85 | 9.91 | 11.22 | 2.93 | .01 |
| Listening | C | 61.93 | 9.95 | 67.64 | 15.72 | 5.71 | 11.94 | 1.78 | .05 |
| | D | 73.0 | 8.76 | 84.25 | 11.62 | 11.25 | 9.94 | 4.38 | .0005 |
| | E | 75.18 | 6.64 | 82.91 | 6.31 | 7.73 | 8.66 | 2.96 | .01 |
| GT 1/2 | C | 60.71 | 5.09 | 68.78 | 10.09 | 8.07 | 7.53 | 3.96 | .005 |
| | D | 73.06 | 4.20 | 83.81 | 8.44 | 10.75 | 7.59 | 5.48 | .0005 |
| | E | 72.73 | 4.05 | 81.55 | 5.69 | 8.82 | 6.15 | 4.77 | .0005 |

Evaluation

Based upon the results presented earlier in Table 1 for the productive writing groups and in Table 3 above for the comparison groups, both syllabi appear to be highly effective. For comparison and evaluation, the data for all five groups are presented below in separate tables for usage, listening, and the GT 1/2. They will be looked at, first, from the perspective of gains. Next, there will be a consideration of the changes in standard deviations. Finally, "z" score changes will be presented.

Usage Gains

The highest gain shown in Table 4 is for Productive Writing Group A (18.79) and the lowest is for Productive Writing Group B (7.13). At the same time, Productive Writing Group B had the highest pretest mean (74.31). The second highest mean gain is for Comparison Group C (10.39) which also had the lowest pretest mean (59.29). Comparison Group E showed the third highest mean gain (9.91) and also had the third highest pretest mean (69.91). Comparison Group D showed the fourth highest mean gain (9.09) while having the second highest pretest mean (73.44). In all cases, the gains are significant.

Table 4.

Means and Standard Deviations of Usage Only Pretest and Posttest Scores and Gains for all Groups on the ALIGU Test.

(N: Productive Writing A = 14; B = 8; Comparison C = 14; D = 16; E = 11)

| Group | Pretest Mean | Pretest SD | Posttest Mean | Posttest SD | Gains Mean | Gains SD | T-Value | Significance Level |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Productive Writing | | | | | | | | |
| A | 64.07 | 14.76 | 82.86 | 8.29 | 18.79 | 10.70 | 6.36 | .0005 |
| B | 74.31 | 9.32 | 81.44 | 5.86 | 7.13 | 5.70 | 3.55 | .005 |
| Comparison | | | | | | | | |
| C | 59.29 | 8.74 | 69.68 | 12.44 | 10.39 | 9.90 | 3.94 | .005 |
| D | 73.44 | 8.13 | 82.53 | 10.03 | 9.09 | 8.78 | 4.00 | .005 |
| E | 69.91 | 8.00 | 79.82 | 10.85 | 9.91 | 11.22 | 2.93 | .01 |

Listening Gains

Table 5 below shows the highest mean gain in listening is for Productive Writing Group A (12.64) which had the fourth highest pretest mean (63.0). The second highest mean gain is for Comparison Group D (11.25) which tied with Productive Writing Group B for the second highest pretest mean (73.0). Productive Writing Group B had the third highest mean gain (9.0). The fourth highest mean gain is for Comparison Group E (7.73) which also had the highest pretest mean (75.18). The lowest mean gain is for Comparison Group C (5.71) which also had the lowest pretest mean (61.93). Again, in all cases, the gains are significant.

Table 5.

Means and Standard Deviations of Listening Only Pretest and Posttest Scores and Gains on the ALIGU Test.

(N: Productive Writing A = 14; B = 8; Comparison C = 14; D = 16; E = 11.)

| | Pretest | | Posttest | | Gains | | T- | Significance |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Group | Mean | SD | Mean | SD | Mean | SD | Value | Level |
| Productive Writing | | | | | | | | |
| A | 63.0 | 11.05 | 75.64 | 8.71 | 12.64 | 9.42 | 4.92 | .0005 |
| B | 73.0 | 8.25 | 82.0 | 6.55 | 9.0 | 6.89 | 3.70 | .005 |
| Comparison | | | | | | | | |
| C | 61.93 | 9.95 | 67.64 | 15.72 | 5.71 | 11.94 | 1.78 | .05 |
| D | 73.0 | 8.76 | 84.25 | 11.62 | 11.25 | 9.94 | 4.38 | .0005 |
| E | 75.18 | 6.64 | 82.91 | 6.31 | 7.73 | 8.66 | 2.96 | .01 |

GT 1/2 Gains

The GT 1/2 score is arrived at by adding the usage and listening scores and dividing by two. Table 6 below shows these scores for all five groups. The highest mean gain is for Productive Writing Group A (15.79) which had the fourth highest pretest mean (63.64). The second highest mean gain is for Comparison Group D (10.75) which also had the second highest pretest mean (73.06). The third highest mean gain is for Comparison Group E (8.82) which also had the third highest pretest mean (72.73). The lowest mean gain is for Productive Writing Group B (7.88) which had the highest pretest mean (74.0).

Table 6.

Means and Standard Deviations of GT 1/2 Only Pretest and Posttest Scores and Gains on the ALIGU Test.

(N: Productive Writing A = 14; B = 8; Comparison C = 14; D = 16; E = 11.)

| Group | Pretest Mean | Pretest SD | Posttest Mean | Posttest SD | Gains Mean | Gains SD | T-Value | Significance Level |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Productive Writing | | | | | | | | |
| A | 63.64 | 5.53 | 79.43 | 5.49 | 15.79 | 6.54 | 8.49 | .0005 |
| B | 74.0 | 3.96 | 81.88 | 3.34 | 7.88 | 3.09 | 7.23 | .0005 |
| Comparison | | | | | | | | |
| C | 60.71 | 5.09 | 68.78 | 10.09 | 8.07 | 7.53 | 3.96 | .005 |
| D | 73.06 | 4.20 | 83.81 | 8.44 | 10.75 | 7.59 | 5.48 | .0005 |
| E | 72.73 | 4.05 | 81.55 | 5.69 | 8.82 | 6.15 | 4.77 | .0005 |

On the basis, then, of the scores and gains common to all groups, Productive Writing Group A consistently scored the highest mean in the three sets of scores. At the same time, Productive Writing Group B showed the lowest mean gain in usage and the GT 1/2 and the third highest mean gain in listening. Yet, this group also had the highest pretest mean in usage and the GT 1/2 and the second highest in listening. It also had the smallest number of subjects. Comparison Group C had the second highest mean gain in usage, the lowest in listening, and the fourth highest in the GT 1/2, while it also had the lowest pretest mean in the three sets of scores. Comparison Group D had the second highest mean gains in listening and the GT 1/2 and the fourth highest in usage, but also had the second highest pretest means. Comparison Group E had the third highest mean gain in usage, fourth highest in listening, and third highest in the GT 1/2, while it had the third highest pretest mean in usage, the highest in listening, and the third highest in the GT 1/2 pretest means.

No clear picture emerges here of a consistent difference except for Productive Writing Group A. The other groups show that both syllabi appear to be effective on the basis of means. In order to get a clearer picture, other data will be presented. Standard deviations will be looked at first; then, "z" score change in the GT 1/2 scores will be presented. Finally, other evidence will be presented.

Standard Deviations

In looking at the standard deviations, a better understanding of the range of scores can be had. The smaller the standard deviation, the narrower the range of scores, and the more homogeneity within the groups. A comparison of pretest and posttest standard deviations, then, can show if the groups tended to become more homogeneous at the end. At the same time, if these figures increase in the posttest over the pretest, this would be an indication that the treatment may have tended to benefit some and not others.

To facilitate comparison and evaluation, the standard deviation data have been extrapolated from Tables 4, 5, and 6 and appear in Table 7 below.

In the usage and listening scores, both Productive Writing Groups A and B show a good decrease in the posttest standard deviations over the pretest, indicating a narrower range of scores and greater homogeneity at the end. At the same time, there was little or no change in the standard deviations in the GT 1/2 pretest and posttest scores, indicating that they remained homogeneous in terms of this global score.

On the other hand, there was an increase in standard deviations in the pretest over the posttest in usage and listening for all Comparison Groups except Group E which remained homogeneous in listening. At the same time, there was also an increase in the pretest standard deviations over the posttest in

the GT 1/2 for all groups. With the exception of Comparison Group E in the listening subtest, the Comparison Groups tended to become less homogeneous at the end.

Table 7.

Standard Deviations of Pretest and Posttest Usage, Listening, and GT 1/2 Scores on the ALIGU Test.

(N: Productive Writing A = 14; B = 8; Comparison C = 14; D = 16; E = 11.)

| | Usage | | Listening | | GT 1/2 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Group | Pretest | Posttest | Pretest | Posttest | Pretest | Posttest |
| Productive Writing | | | | | | |
| A | 14.76 | 8.29 | 11.05 | 8.71 | 5.53 | 5.49 |
| B | 9.32 | 5.86 | 8.25 | 6.55 | 3.96 | 3.34 |
| Comparison | | | | | | |
| C | 8.74 | 12.44 | 9.95 | 15.72 | 5.09 | 10.09 |
| D | 8.13 | 10.03 | 8.76 | 11.62 | 4.20 | 8.44 |
| E | 8.00 | 10.85 | 6.64 | 6.31 | 4.05 | 5.69 |

On the basis of the data presented above, it is possible to see a difference between the Productive Writing Groups and the Comparison Groups on the basis of changes in the standard deviations. The decrease shown by the Productive Writing Groups indicate that in all three sets of scores the range of scores became less extreme, and the increase shown by the Comparison Groups indicate the converse to be true.

Next, "z" score changes in the GT 1/2 score (a global one) will be presented.

"Z" Score Changes

Another indication of growth is "z" score changes, that is, the number of standard deviation increases achieved. This is determined by subtracting the pretest mean from the posttest mean and dividing by the pretest standard deviation. The GT 1/2 scores have been used in this measurement because of the global nature of this score. The changes for all groups are shown in Table 8 below. The largest change is shown by Productive Writing Group A (2.85) and the smallest by Comparison Group C (1.58). Since an increase of one standard deviation over a school year is considered acceptable progress (Henning in Schleppergrell, 1982), the progress shown by all groups must be interpreted as extremely good growth here.

Table 8.

"Z" Score Changes in GT 1/2 Scores on the ALIGU Test.

(N: Productive Writing A = 14; B = 8; Comparison C = 14; D = 16; E = 11)

| Group | Pretest Mean | Posttest Mean | Pretest Standard Deviation | "Z" Score Change |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Productive Writing | | | | |
| A | 63.64 | 79.43 | 5.53 | 2.85 |
| B | 74.0 | 81.88 | 3.96 | 1.99 |
| Comparison | | | | |
| C | 60.71 | 68.78 | 5.09 | 1.58 |
| D | 73.06 | 83.81 | 4.20 | 2.55 |
| E | 72.73 | 81.55 | 4.05 | 2.17 |

The data presented above shows that all groups experienced very good growth in terms of the "z" score change. The Productive Writing Group A achieved the best, and Productive Writing Group B did better than one of the comparison groups and almost as well as a second.

One goal of instruction at the advanced level is to raise the students' level of general proficiency in English as measured by the ALIGU test to or above the minimum scores determined by USAID to be necessary in order for these students to benefit from their training experience in the United States. These minimum scores and the percentage of students in the five groups who achieved these scores is presented below as other evidence for evaluation purposes.

Other Evidence

USAID has set up what it calls "minimum scores for immediate call-forward -- academic and non-academic programs." "Call-forward" means that a candidate is scheduled to depart immediately to begin his or her training program in the United States. These minimum scores represent a level of achievement in English proficiency considered necessary by USAID before a candidate leaves for training. This is based upon USAID's experience with thousands of trainees over a number of years. These levels are shown below in Table 9.

Table 9.

Minimum Scores for Immediate Call-forward

| Test | Academic Programs | Non-academic Programs |
|---|---|---|
| English Usage | 80 | 70 |
| Listening | 75 | 65 |
| Reading & Vocabulary | 65 | -- |

On the basis of these levels, the effectiveness of the productive writing approach can also be inspected vis-a-vis the grammar approach. A group-by-group discussion follows of the number of students who achieved these levels. Then, these results are presented as percentages in Table 10 to follow.

Productive Writing A, Non-academic (Number: 14). In usage, five students had scores above the necessary level on the pretest, and all but one were above on the posttest. (The one who did not meet the necessary level had a final score of 69.5, a half point below that level.) In listening, again five students had scores above the minimum on the pretest and all but two were above on the posttest.

Productive Writing B, Academic (Number: 8). In usage, three students were at or above the necessary level on the pretest, while all but one were above on the posttest. In listening, four students were above the necessary level on the pretest, and all were above the minimum on the posttest. In reading and vocabulary, none were at or above the minimum on the pretest, while all but two were above on the posttest.

Comparison C, Academic (Number: 14). In usage, none of the students were at or above the necessary level on the pretest, and only two were above on the posttest. In listening, two were above the minimum level on the pretest, and six were at or above the necessary level on the posttest. In reading and vocabulary, pretest scores are not available.

Comparison D, Academic (Number: 16). In usage, one student was above the minimum level on the pretest, and eight were above on the posttest. In listening, six were above the minimum level on the pretest, and eleven were above on the posttest. In reading and vocabulary, three were above the minimum on the pretest, and seven were above on the posttest.

Comparison E, Academic (Number: 11). In usage, one student was above the minimum level on the pretest, and four were above on the posttest. (One other had a final usage score of 79.5, a half point below the minimum.) In listening, six were at or above the minimum level on the pretest, and all were above on the posttest. In reading and vocabulary, four students were above the minimum level, while only three were above on the posttest.

These results are expressed in percentages in Table 10 below.

Table 10.

Percentage of Students at or above Minimum Level Set by USAID for Immediate Call-forward for Travel.

| Group | Usage | | Listening | | Reading & Vocabulary | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Pretest | Posttest | Pretest | Posttest | Pretest | Posttest |
| Productive Writing | | | | | | |
| A (N = 14) | 36 | 93 | 36 | 86 | N/A | N/A |
| B (N = 8) | 38 | 88 | 50 | 100 | 00 | 75 |
| Comparison | | | | | | |
| C (N = 14) | 00 | 14 | 14 | 43 | N/A | N/A |
| D (N = 16) | 06 | 50 | 38 | 69 | 19 | 44 |
| E (N = 11) | 09 | 36 | 55 | 100 | 36 | 27 |

On an overall evaluation of all of the evidence presented above, it appears that a subject matter-based syllabus was more effective than a grammar-based syllabus, thus supporting the second hypothesis in this study. The picture was not clear on the basis of mean scores and gains alone. However, standard deviations showed that the range of scores decreased for the productive writing groups and increased for the comparison groups. The decrease in range of scores suggested that there were fewer extreme scores among the students in the productive writing groups. This was borne out when the number and percentage of students in all groups to meet the minimum ALIGU scores set by USAID were examined. The productive writing groups were clearly more successful in this regard. At the same time, the growth of all groups was impressive.

## Conclusions

This study suggests a new and viable approach to teaching English at the advanced level to a new generation of EFL students. These are professionals who are reasonably established in their fields but who need to improve their English proficiency. This study suggests that productive writing as subject matter can significantly improve proficiency while also teaching a needed but often neglected skill.

Fundamental to the design of the productive writing syllabus was the concept of comprehension preceding production. Because

writing in English is different from writing in Arabic, it was felt that considerable input in the form of discussion and analysis of appropriate models, examination of various constructions used in writing, and attention to the distinction between written and spoken English was necessary before production. Production cannot be expected in an acceptable form until there is a comprehension -- an understanding -- of what that acceptable form is. The type of input mentioned above, through focusing the students' attention on a new skill, was believed to be a way of providing a unique opportunity for enhancing acquisition. Results presented in this study fully support this belief.

Subject matter teaching was put forward by Krashen (1982) as an alternative approach to use with the advanced student. In addition, he pointed out that the traditional grammar class can also provide opportunities for acquisition through talking about the language. This notion is supported by the results achieved by the three comparison groups. At the same time, the notion of subject matter teaching as a viable alternative is fully supported by this study. In addition to the gains achieved in the productive writing groups, these students were also working on a needed skill.

The productive writing approach described in this study is not a panacea to be applied in any and all situations, at

any and all levels. But it does provide an opportunity for a holistic approach to teaching English. The necessary initial input involves speaking, listening, and reading. And the writing assignments themselves, because they are not creative writing, also involve these other skills. Conventions of written and spoken grammar are addressed within the context of the four skills. Furthermore, techniques involved in the writing assignments are designed to be readily transferrable to academic and professional work. In this way, the approach to language is both integrative and practical.

One writing assignment, in particular, provided an unexpected area of input. When the first group was asked to summarize an article they had read, the approach taken by most of the students was to lift the material verbatim from the article itself without any form of acknowledgment. This provided an opportunity to discuss plagiarism. This researcher does not know if this is acceptable practice while writing in Arabic, but the possible consequences of it in an American university setting were made known. With the second group, time was allotted before this assignment to work on paraphrasing, summarizing, and reported speech in greater depth. Also, students were required to hand in their articles along with the summary. This procedure solved this problem and is highly recommended whenever this exercise is used.

The actual assignments used here are based on those from a journalism course on magazine article and feature story writing taken by this researcher a few years ago at the American University in Cairo. The direct relevance of these assignments for academic and professional writing purposes was recognized. While these writing tasks have been used at the advanced level, they might also be usable at other levels as a logical step beyond guided composition. For example, the article summary could be changed to a summary of a movie or a television show. The concepts of structure and organization can be taught before usage and vocabulary have reached a sophisticated level.

Based on the data in Table 10 in the section on other evidence above, further research is suggested in terms of the impact of writing upon reading comprehension. The achievements of Productive Writing Group B as shown in that table tend to suggest that such a relationship might exist.

The notion of using a skill as subject matter in teaching English has been supported in this study. Possibly, other skills might be used in the same way. For example, "remedial reading" could be the focal point of such a course. This, again, is a subject taught to native speakers. Readings would be discussed (speaking and listening); summarizing and notetaking (writing) could assist or demonstrate comprehension; listening to readings

of passages could show the rhythm of the written language; and reading aloud (speaking and reading) might help the student to move beyond the word by word stage as a result of "phrasing." Since reading comprehension is concerned with meaning, it should have an effect on acquisition.

This study has suggested an alternative approach to use with the advanced level student. The population served by this study is large. It is composed of professionals who are already working in their fields but who need improvement in their English proficiency. They are experientially mature and linguistically immature. Their needs are immediate and well known to them. They bring well trained and disciplined minds to the task at hand. As such, they can properly be described as a new generation of EFL students, and any approach used with them must, in the final analysis, realistically meet the challenge they represent.

# APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Syllabus for

ADVANCED TECHNICAL ENGLISH

120 hours: 15 hours weekly

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Week One | Listening | Oral-aural diagnostic test. |
| | Listening/ Speaking | Reports and discussion of news of the day. |
| | Grammar | Azar. Chapter 1. "Questions." |
| | Reading | Reading for the main idea. Reader's Choice, pages 21-25. |
| | Writing | Topic sentences. Paragraph Development, Chapter 1. |
| Week Two | Listening | Listening in the Real World. |
| | Listening/ Speaking | Reports and discussion of the news of the day. |
| | Grammar | Azar. Chapter 2. "Singular and Plural." |
| | Reading | Reading for restatements and inferences. Reader's Choice, pages 51-54. |
| | Writing | Topic sentences concluded. From Paragraph to Composition, Chapter 8 in Paragraph Development. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Week Three | Listening | Continue with Listening in the Real World. |
| | Listening/ Speaking | Reports and discussion of the news of the day. |
| | Grammar | Azar. Chapter 3. "Verb Tenses." |
| | Reading | Editorial from The Egyptian Gazette, October 11, 1983. |
| | Writing | Supporting topic sentences: examples, details, anecdotes. Paragraph Development, Chapter 2. |
| | Writing Assignment | Write an anecdote to illustrate a point as suggested in Paragraph Development, Chapter 2. |
| Week Four | Listening | Continue with Listening in the Real World. |
| | Listening/ Speaking | Reports and discussion of the news of the day. |
| | Grammar | Conclude verb tenses, Chapter 3, Azar. |
| | Reading | Reading for restatements and inferences, Reader's Choice, pages 82-85. |
| | Writing | Supporting topic sentences: enumeration. Paragraph Development, Chapter 3. |
| | Writing Assignment | Distribute and discuss schedule of writing assignments for balance of course. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Week Five | Listening | Continue with Listening in the Real World. |
| | Listening/ Speaking | Reports and discussion of the news of the day. |
| | Grammar | Azar. Chapter 4. "Passives." |
| | Reading | Reading for restatements and inferences, Reader's Choice, pages 113-116. |
| | Writing | Conclude Chapter 3, Paragraph Development. |
| | Writing Assignment | Summary of an article. |
| | Guest Speaker | Dr. Mark C. Kennedy, Professor of Sociology, American University in Cairo. "The Other Side of Progress." |
| Week Six | Listening | Continue with Listening in the Real World. |
| | Listening/ Speaking | Reports and discussion of the news of the day. |
| | Grammar | Azar. Chapter 5. "Modal Auxiliaries - I." |
| | Reading | Reading for restatements and inferences, Reader's Choice, pages 157-159. |
| | Writing | Process and chronology. Paragraph Development, Chapter 4. |
| | Writing Assignment | In-depth interview. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Week Seven | Listening | Continue with Listening in the Real World. |
| | Listening/ Speaking | Reports and discussion of the news of the day. |
| | Grammar | Azar. Chapter 6. "Modal Auxiliaries - II." |
| | Reading | Reading for restatements and inferences, Reader's Choice, pages 184-187. |
| | Writing | Cause and Effect. Paragraph Development, Chapter 5. |
| | Writing Assignment | Survey: "Man-on-the-Street." |
| Week Eight | Listening | Continue with Listening in the Real World. |
| | Listening/ Speaking | Reports and discussion of the news of the day. |
| | Grammar | Azar. Chapter 7. "Gerunds and Infinitives." |
| | Reading | Paragraph reading for full understanding, Reader's Choice, pages 117-127. |
| | Writing | Comparison and contrast. Paragraph Development, Chapter 6. |
| | Writing Assignment | Work-related report or memorandum. |

Appendix B

Advanced English - Technical
Mrs. Edie
Fall 1983

## WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

Below is a list of writing assignments and the dates on which they are due. General guidelines are suggested for each. If you do not understand the assignment or have difficulty with a topic, please check with me. Any question you have will be welcome.

1. Summary of an article. Please read an article in English and summarize it in approximately three paragraphs. The article is of your choice. I suggest that you choose an article which interests you. This can be from a magazine or a newspaper, but it must be in English. I have some magazines if you need help.

   Due: Sunday, October 23.

2. Personality Profile. For this assignment, you will need to interview one person. This interview is to be in English, and I prefer that you interview a native speaker of English. You should have a number of questions prepared before your interview (see Chapter 1 in Azar). At the same time, listen very carefully to the other person because his or her answers can suggest additional questions which you had not thought of. We will discuss in class some general categories of questions.

   Due: Sunday, October 30.

3. "Man-on-the-Street." For this assignment, you will need to formulate one question and ask it of at least ten people. Then, you will need to arrange their responses under general headings. You will need to mention them by name and, if possible, quote them exactly.

   Due: Sunday, November 6.

4. Report or Memorandum. This report or memorandum should be addressed to your supervisor, an American counterpart (if you work with one), or to me. The subject is of your choice but should be on some aspect of your work.

   Due: Sunday, November 13.

Having this schedule of assignments, you will hopefully be able to plan your time so as to complete and turn in your assignments on time.

Assignment: Summary of an article.

Instructions to Students: Read an article of your own choice in English and summarize it in three or more paragraphs. The article can be from a magazine or a newspaper. I suggest you choose an article which interests you, but it must be in English. Please submit the article along with your assignment.

Purpose of the Assignment:

1. Assignment works on two skills: reading and writing.
2. Article chosen for summarizing demonstrates organization to the student.
3. Student must read for comprehension.
4. Summarizing involves analysis and synthesis of the material read.
5. Student learns how to paraphrase material.
6. Student learns how to quote directly and to use reported speech.
7. Experience from assignment can translate directly into student's future academic work and later into professional writing responsibilities.

Materials Used:

1. Textbook -- Paragraph Development, Chapter 8.
2. Book reviews from Time and Cairo Today.
3. Personally prepared article summaries.

Problems to be Anticipated:

There are two problems which can be expected with this assignment. The first is most critical.

1. The main problem concerns the lifting of material directly from the article without indicating that it is a direct quotation. The subject of plagiarism needs to be thoroughly discussed. Additionally, the student must be told that this is grounds for dismissal from any American college or university and that it has serious legal consequences if the student publishes.

2. Another problem concerns logic and inference. If the article, for example, discusses cause and effect, then the summary must also reflect the same cause-effect chain expressed in the article so as not to distort the meaning.

These two problems are unique to this type of writing assignment.

Suggested Solutions:

1. Study model book reviews and other materials.
2. Practice paraphrasing sentences from sample readings.
3. Work on useful vocabulary and phrases for reported speech.
4. Recommend the following steps:
   a. Read article carefully for meaning while looking for main ideas.
   b. Allow at least an hour after reading in order to permit assimilation of meaning and main ideas.
   c. Skim article, and write first draft.
   d. Put draft aside until next day, if possible.
   e. Check draft of summary for coverage of main ideas, logical exposition, grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization.
   f. Revise and put in final form.
   g. Submit summary together with article.

Assignment: Personality Profile or Interview in Depth.

Instructions to Students: For this assignment, you will need to interview one person. This interview is to be in English, and I prefer that you interview a native speaker of English. You should have a number of questions prepared before your interview (see Chapter 1 in Azar). At the same time, listen very carefully to the other person because his or her answers can suggest additional questions which you had not thought of. We will discuss in class some general categories of questions.

Purpose of the Assignment:

1. Assignment works on three skills: speaking, listening, and writing.
2. Student must listen for comprehension.
3. Assignment works on note taking.
4. Assignment gives practice in asking questions in two ways:
   a. Based on questions prepared in advance.
   b. Based on respondent's answers so that questions are spontaneous; asking for clarification.
5. Assignment works on both direct quotation and reported speech.
6. Demonstrates student's ability to organize material.
7. Translates directly into future professional work (e.g., memoranda summarizing visits or telephone calls).

Materials Used:

Interviews published in Time and Cairo Today.

Problems to be Anticipated:

1. Reported speech needs to be reviewed in terms of tense changes involved.
2. Necessary vocabulary and phrases for variety in reported speech situations needs to be reviewed.
3. Attention needs to be given to style.

4. Not all student may be able to find a native speaker to interview.

Suggested Solutions:

If some students are either too shy or are unable to find a native speaker to interview, then the presentation of a guest speaker in the classroom may be substituted for this assignment.

Assignment: Survey or "Man-on-the-Street"

Instructions to Students: For this assignment, you will need to formulate one question and ask it of at least ten people. Then, you will need to arrange their responses under general headings. You will need to mention the people by name and, if possible, quote them exactly.

Purpose of the Assignment:

1. Assignment works on three skills: speaking, listening, and writing.

2. Student must word his or her question precisely and unambiguously.

3. Assignment works on note taking.

4. Student must be prepared to ask for clarification of answer if necessary.

5. Assignment works on organizing the material gathered.

6. Also works on attribution.

7. Assignment works on both direct quotation and reported speech.

8. Assignment works on comparison and contrast of opinions.

9. Techniques translate into academic and professional research in that the assignment demonstrates how organization is based on content.

Materials Used:

1. Model paragraphs in Paragraph Development showing comparison and contrast.

2. Articles analyzing positions taken by interested parties concerning proposed legislation, etc.

3. Assignments done by former students.

Problems to be Anticipated:

Students initially find this assignment to be extremely difficult because it can involve talking to strangers. When it is completed, it is usually the best assignment they have produced.

Assignment: Report or Memorandum.

Instructions to the Students: This report or memorandum should be addressed to your supervisor, an American counterpart (if you work with one), or to me. The subject is of your choice but should be on some aspect of your work.

Purpose of the Assignment:

1. This assignment possibly works on only one skill: writing.

2. Assignment puts into practice and synthesizes organizational techniques used in previous assignments.

3. Demonstrates to the student his or her ability to write in English in a practical application.

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